

On 5th January 1919, shortly after the end of World War I, a man called Anton Dexler, from Munich, Germany, set up a political party called the DAP (*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei)* [German Workers’ Party]. A few months later, a man called Adolf Hitler was sent to one of their meetings as a spy of the German Army. He got into an argument with a member of the party, and the founder Anton Dexler, was so impressed by his passion for politics that he invited Hitler to join the party. In September 1919, Hitler joined the party and worked as its propagandist, and soon after the name of the party was changed to NSDAP (***Nati****onalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) [ National Socialist German Workers’ Party].

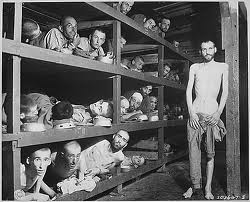
After World War I, Germany was in a state of economic depression and the society was very unstable. The Nazi Party claimed that the German war effort was sabotaged by the Jews, Soviets and Bolsheviks who were living in Germany and they believed that they had a lack of patriotism. The Nazis voiced their opinions about these groups of people through their newspaper *Die Völkischer Beobachter* which could be bought from 1920. Through the propaganda in this newspaper about the failure of the government after the war and many other things, it produced a constant strength for the Nazis. The party began to grow steadily and more popular and in a Voting Poll in 1932, it was obvious that the Nazis were the largest parliamentary group of the Weimar Republic Government. Soon after, on January 30th 1933, the leader of the party, Adolf Hitler, was made the *Kanzler* (Chancellor / Prime Minister) of Germany.

On February 27th 1933, a fire broke out in the *Reichstag* (Parliament Building in Berlin). Hitler accused other political parties for it and began to suppress all his political opponents. Very soon after this event, the only political party which existed in Germany was that of the Nazis. Hitler abolished labour unions and all other political parties, and also imprisoned his political opponents. On March 23rd 1933, Hitler convinced President Paul von Hindenburg to pass an Enabling Act. This Act gave dictatorial power to Hitler which meant that he had more power than the President and had totalitarian power. He now had the joint title of *Kanzler* and *der Führer* and he called his dictatorship ‘*Das Drittes Reich’* (the Third Empire). From this point on, Hitler was unstoppable and in September 1939, he invaded Poland, and started World War II.



Hitler and his followers believed in the supremacy of the ‘Ayran race’. He wanted the ‘racial purity of the German people’ and spoke many times about how the German people were the greatest in the world. He wanted every foreign person out of Germany to make room for those Germans who had left during World War I and who wanted to return to the Fatherland. He wanted ‘*das Volk’* (the people) to be reunited.

He believed in total inequality among races, nations and individuals. He claimed that the Jews were the greatest threat to Germany and called them a ‘parasitic race’. He declared that he was the protector of Germany from the Jewish influence and corruption. This harsh Anti-Semitism was obvious is everyday life, as Jewish people were the victims of brutal attacks. ‘*Die Judenfrage’* (the Jew Question) troubled the Nazi Party for many years, until one day, they found a solution.



Hitler made a list of people who had ‘lives unworthy of living’. These groups of people included the Jews, Slavs, Roma and Sinti, Communists, homosexuals and the mentally and physically disabled. For the mentally and disabled people, he established a Euthanasia programme, and for the other groups, they were forced into concentration camps or extermination camps. Hitler and the Nazi Party are responsible for the systematic, factory-like deaths of over 12 million people, with 6 million of them being Jewish.

**Activity**

1. Who set up DAP and when was it set up?
2. What was Hitler working as when he went to the DAP meeting?
3. What does NSDAP stand for?
4. How was Germany after World War I?
5. What is Propaganda?
6. What does *Kanzler* mean?
7. What was the Enabling Act?
8. What did Hitler believe about the German people?
9. Who did the Nazi party believe were the biggest threat to Germany?
10. What happened to people who had ‘lives unworthy of living’?